



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

## Speaker Silver and Senator Squadron Announce Signing of Law to Reduce Overcrowding in New York City Schools

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### **Governor Cuomo Signs Law Requiring New York City School Construction Authority To Account for Population Growth in Planning New Schools**

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senator Daniel Squadron announced today that legislation they sponsored to help address the severe overcrowding problem in New York City schools has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The law requires the city's School Construction Authority (SCA) to collect population data and use this information in connection with the authority's five-year educational facilities capital plan (A.10108 / S.07873). It requires the SCA and the New York City schools chancellor to account for how future population growth might affect continued overcrowding.

"With this law, we now have a powerful and effective new tool to fight the pervasive problem of overcrowding in our schools," Speaker Silver said. "In my own Lower Manhattan community, families spend anxious months with their children on waitlists that can run over 100 names only to find classrooms filled to the brim and schools far over their capacity. In Queens and other parts of our city, children sit in makeshift trailers year after year because their schools have no space for them. This cannot continue. We have an obligation to give our children the highest quality education possible and that means smaller class sizes. I want to thank my partner in this effort, Senator Squadron, as well Governor Cuomo

for signing this important law.”

"For five years I've pushed my bill to require the City to use better data -- like births and building permits -- so planning for schools reflects the changing needs of communities. Better information, a focus on neighborhoods, and more transparency will mean better, less crowded schools for more school kids," said Senator Squadron. "Good planning alone won't solve overcrowding, but it will make it a lot more likely that good decisions are made for the future, and that classrooms will be there when families need them. I'm glad to have partnered with Speaker Silver and local stakeholders to get this bill passed, and I thank Governor Cuomo for signing this important law."

"The winners from this bill are all the schoolchildren of New York City," said Eric Greenleaf, professor of marketing at the Stern School of Business at NYU, and also a member of Speaker Silver's School Overcrowding Task Force. "It brings much-needed reforms to forecasting school enrollments here. The new emphasis on using neighborhood-level data, and more useful data, such as building permits for new apartments and houses and mapping recent births, will help the Department of Education forecast enrollments more accurately, build needed schools in a timely manner, and alleviate school overcrowding."

The law authorizes the SCA to enter into agreements and work with New York City's office of City Planning and Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Buildings and Housing Preservation and Development to access relevant data and render any services required in order to create uniform, student population projections for a minimum of five years to be used in the creation and implementation of the SCA's five-year capital plan, as well as school sitings.

It also requires the SCA to publicly respond to issues raised at Community Education Council (CEC) hearings on both school sitings and in response to the capital plan, including

why alternative recommendations were or were not incorporated into the final plans and how any changes made to the proposed plan resulted from issues raised at hearings.

State law currently requires the New York City school district and the SCA to develop a five-year educational capital plan. This plan must describe each project proposed in the plan, an estimate of the capital funding required each year and the expected sources of funding, an estimate of the cost of each project and the year in which construction will begin on each project.